

Meeting No. 1260

15 October 74

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NATIONAL INDICATIONS CENTER

DRAFT WATCH REPORT

for

WATCH COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

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NIC DRAFT WATCH REPORT
of the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

No. 1260

15 October 1974

1 The Committee concludes that there will be
2 no military attack on the United States or
3 its overseas forces in the near future.

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4 Subjects of immediate concern are discussed
5 below.

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7 I. Middle East

8 1. Although the Arabs and Israelis have the military
9 capability to initiate major offensive action with little
10 or no warning, both sides are presently demonstrating a
11 willingness to continue exploration of political options
12 for a settlement of the Middle East problem. Unless a
13 major setback occurs in the diplomatic process, we believe
14 that combined action by Cairo and Damascus to resume the
15 war is unlikely at least through the end of the year.
16 There is a greater possibility that either Syria or Israel
17 might initiate fighting on the Golan Heights, but winter
18 rains and snow beginning in late November will inhibit the
19 conduct of major military operations in that area.

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21 2. Recent tactical successes may spur Baghdad to increase
22 its efforts to effect a quick military victory over the
23 Kurdish rebels. The prospects for such a solution, how-
24 ever, seem dim in view of the approach of winter weather

25 which will hamper operations for both sides. Stepped-up
26 support to the Kurds by Tehran in the last two weeks in-
27 creases the possibility of further clashes between Iraqi
28 and Iranian forces in the border area. [redacted]

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29 II. USSR-Eastern Europe

30 3. We see no indications of hostile intent in the mili-
31 tary activity of the USSR and other Warsaw Pact nations.

32 [redacted]

33 III. Southeast Asia

34 4. In South Vietnam, the main thrust of military action
35 will continue in Military Region 1, where the Communists
36 are making efforts to interrupt primary lines of communica-
37 tion. [redacted]

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BACKUPI. Middle EastISRAEL-ARAB STATES

1a. The latest round of peace talks in the Middle East reinforces the impression that all sides still favor seeking a political solution to the situation. When the Arabs complete their summit conference at the end of this month and Secretary Kissinger resumes negotiations (possibly in November), it should become clearer whether or not there can be enough of a trade-off of political and territorial concessions to satisfy the objectives of the Arabs and Israelis. In the interim, events other than the collapse of negotiations could endanger the precarious stand-off between both sides and precipitate an outbreak of fighting on either or both fronts. Some of these possible events are:

- A belief by Tel Aviv that the balance of military power is shifting toward the Arabs.
- A serious military miscalculation, such as a major violation of the disengagement agreement on either front, which could lead one side to believe the other was preparing to attack.
- A military incident which could escalate into a series of action-reaction moves.
- A decision by Syria not to renew the UNDOF mandate on the Golan Heights.
- A terrorist attack resulting in Israeli loss of life and/or property of such magnitude that Tel Aviv would invade Lebanon (possibly as far north as the Litani River), forcing Damascus to act.
- The outbreak of civil war in Lebanon in which Israel and Syria become involved because of the fedayeen.
- The assassination of a prominent Arab leader, particularly Asad or Sadat.
- A coup in either Egypt or Syria.

1b. In view of the above factors, and the fact that the Arabs and Israelis have the military capability to launch a full-scale offensive within a minimum of time after the political decision is made, long-range forecasts concerning the viability of the current cease-fire are hazardous. There are adequate indications [redacted] that the Arabs are pessimistic concerning the outcome of diplomatic efforts and that they will not allow the present situation of no-war no-peace to continue indefinitely. [redacted]

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BACKUPI. Middle East (cont'd)SOVIET REACTIONS

1c. Brezhnev used his recent visit to Soviet Moldavia to reiterate Moscow's call for a return to Geneva to continue the Middle East Peace Conference. In his speech, he emphasized a need to resume the peace talks at the "earliest date" and warned that "to prolong the present situation which is of benefit only to Israeli occupiers means to sit on a powder keg which may burst at any moment." Brezhnev took a rather tough line against further delays in returning to the conference table and was unusually pointed in endorsing the Palestinian Liberation Organization and its leadership. This view was quite forcefully made when he included the leadership of the PLO among those Arab States with whom the USSR is developing "friendly cooperation." In calling for the liberation of Israeli-captured lands, Brezhnev placed on the record a demand that "the legitimate interests of the Arab people of Palestine be met and their right to a national homeland be satisfied." The US Embassy in Moscow, commenting on this particular passage, noted that Brezhnev treated the Palestinian issue in a "state" context but stopped short of using the word. While the speech was probably aimed at reassuring the Arab world that Moscow was in their corner, it also was timed to coincide with the current visit of the US Secretary of State to the Middle East and may have been designed to signal Soviet impatience over the lack of movement toward a peace settlement.

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1d. While Kissinger's efforts are designed to reconcile differences between the adversaries and achieve some movement toward a renewal of the peace talks, the Soviets appear to be following a divergent course aimed at preparing Syria for another round of fighting unless Israel returns to the 1967 boundary. Soviet policy since the end of the October 1973 fighting has been designed to provide Syria with the armaments needed to buttress Damascus's resolve to renew the conflict unless the Israelis acquiesce to Syria's demands that its lost territory be returned. Soviet relations with Egypt, on the other hand, have been seriously strained and it is difficult to say what may result from the current trip of Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmi to Moscow. While some Soviet efforts to improve this situation may occur, it is equally possible that Moscow will deliberately play this visit in a low key to signal its displeasure with Sadat and his overtures to the West. This objective could be accomplished simply by continuing to withhold arms shipments to Egypt.

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the Soviets appear to be deeply involved in Middle East politics and their machinations could contribute to a renewal of hostilities in the area, particularly between Syria and Israel.

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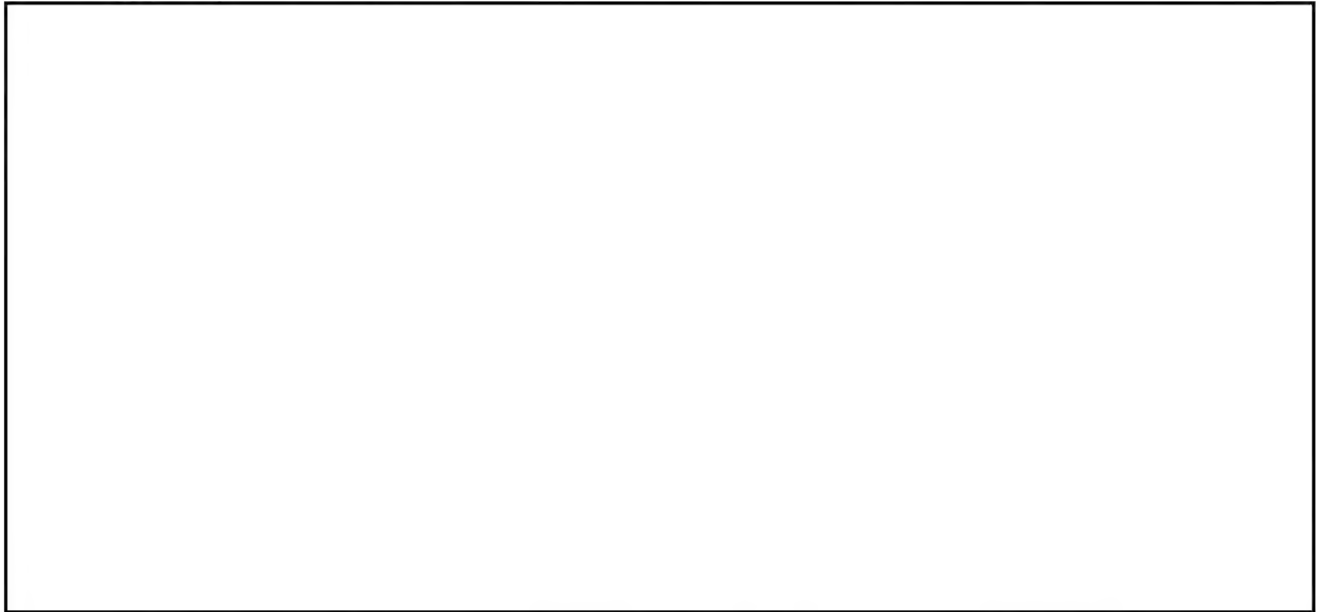
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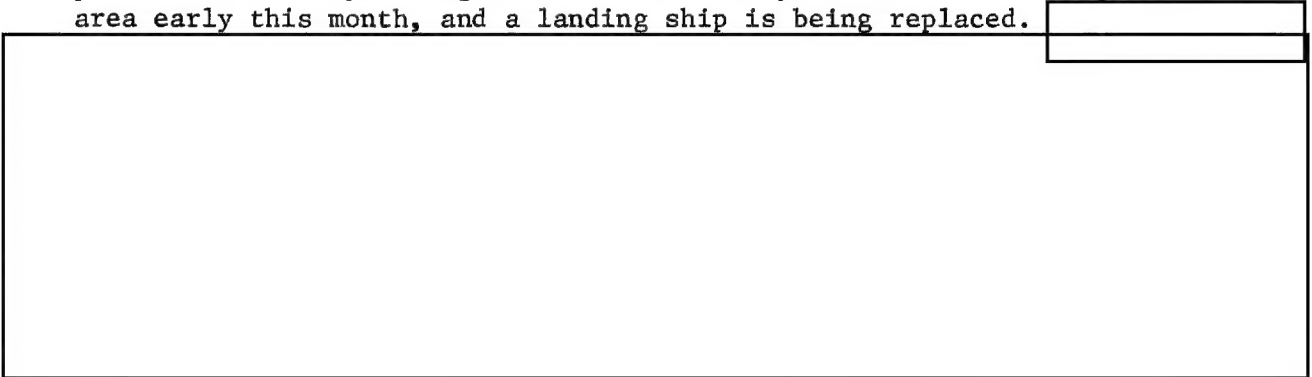
II. USSR-Eastern Europe

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3d. The Soviet Navy will apparently continue its patrol activity off Guinea in response to a renewed request from President Toure who remains apprehensive of possible threats to his regime. He first requested Soviet protection three years ago. A Soviet destroyer returned to the patrol area early this month, and a landing ship is being replaced.

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III. Southeast Asia

VIETNAM

4a. In southern Military Region 1, Communist forces have conducted sapper attacks against bridges on Route 1 in Quang Tin Province, thereby closing the highway until repairs are made. Enemy forces are also continuing their effort to gain high ground overlooking Route 1 north of Hue. Intermittent air attacks are being conducted against the outpost of Chuong Nghia, which is now in enemy hands. Although the loss of Chuong Nghia leaves the city of Kontum (northern MR 2) vulnerable to attack, there are no indications that this will take place in the near future.

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4b. The Communist 5th, 7th and 9th Divisions in Military Region 3 are under strength and do not appear to be in a posture to initiate any large-scale actions for the near term.

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4c. In Military Region 4, the Viet Cong are planning a new phase of attacks throughout the region, which were to commence on 15 October. The purported aim of these attacks is "to exploit and support the political upheaval that is taking place throughout South Vietnam." Due to the limited number of main force units, these attacks are expected to be scattered and small-scale in nature.

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